

COMMANDO SQUAD (1987) THE VIDEO
DIRECTED BY FRED O. RAY

I have a soft spot in my heart (some would say head) for Fred O. Ray movies. They are low budget affairs with inventive casting, a sense of humor, and a complete lack of pretension. He has been toiling in the poverty row for many years, yet he never jumped on any bandwagon in an attempt to cash-in on the latest fad. He just kept on shooting his little films awaiting some type of recognition. Well that day may soon be at hand as his last few films have garnered wide releases and wonder of wonders, half-way decent reviews. COMMANDO SQUAD has been referred to as a poor-mans EXTREME PREJUDICE. Well after viewing Mill's bloated peen to macho boyfriends in love, I'll take a poormans' version anytime. I would be hard pressed to knock any film that features William Smith, and his performance here as the renegade agent is just one of the film's assets. Even perennial bald guy Sid Haig shows up to torture and maim playmate (but no actress) Kathy Shower (what an appropriate appellation) who portrays special agent Cat. Ray wisely uses Robert Quarry in a role that doesn't allow much physical action as Cat's boss. There are a few twist and turns along the way as the plot draws to its obvious conclusion. If its mindless action you want, you could do a lot worse than this. A triple feature of CS along with ARMED AND DANGEROUS and CYCLONE would be an obvious booking if there were any drive-ins left to screen such a combination.

Donald Farmer did indeed send me a review copy of CANNIBAL HOOKERS but before I review it let me pass on some ordering instructions. Donald is selling copies of CANNIBAL HOOKERS through his SPLATTER VIDEO COMPANY at \$19.95. Send it to Donald care of 114 Eic Spring Circle, Cookeville, TN 38501. One of the stars of the film, Sheila Best is a regular on U.L.U.W., known as Lara, the Southern Belle.

CANNIBAL HOOKERS (1987) SPLATTER VIDEO
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DONALD FARMER

With a title like CANNIBAL HOOKERS, one doesn't expect a horror film in the Val Lewton tradition. Well, I'm here to tell you Donald Farmer's made for video release is anything but an out and out M.G. Lewis gorefest either. It certainly isn't the disaster I expected but you have to be aware going in what the limitations of a miniscule budget and virtually no acting talent can do for you. Farmer has risen above these limitations to produce a nice little film with a sense of humor that plays off of genre cliches.

Storywise, no barriers are broken. A very routine script is shot straight forwardly, delivering the money shots (gore and nudity) with equal regularity. Hilary (Amy Waddell) and D.D. (Annette Munro) are two hopeful pledges to the sorority Gamma Zeta Beta. They are forced to dress up as hookers and solicit johns as an initiation exercise. Hilary's current heart throb Bruce and his buddies come along and are roped into the ordeal. They end up at

the ultimate orgy of evil...



CANNIBAL *Hookers*

the cannibal hookers lair where one nerd Dwight is left behind to be eaten. Slowly but surely the entire cast is converted to cannibals. A cop (he drives a porsche convertible) ends up defeating the head cannibal Carmilla and her henchman Lobo (Tor Johnson has nothing to fear from Gary Levinson's performance). What happens to the other cannibals is anyone's guess.

The actors are the MIAOW flock within this film. Almost to a person, they are totally incompetent. It's a shame because Farmer exhibits good directional sense. Without a doubt it's the best looking made for video movie I've ever seen. Farmer and his three

cinematographers (Tony Fabian, Richard Kaschinski, and Glen Kral) bathe certain scenes in primary colors that recalls Bava and Argento in origin (I may be reaching on this one). I also credit Farmer for not going the easy route and shooting a slasher film. The effects take place mostly off camera which definitely strenghtens CH'E mood. There were a few editing glitches in my copy but overall I must admit I hope Farmer graduates to bigger and better things.

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BLOODLUST (1981) TOP VIDEO
DIRECTED BY WALERIAN BOROWCZYK

Originally titled DR. JECKYLL AND MISS OSBOURNE, BLOODLUST is yet another version of The Strange Case of Dr. Jeckyll & Mr. Hyde. However, anytime you have Udo Kier as the star it's going to get very weird before the end credits roll. Directed by the polish expatriate animator Walerian Borowczyk (whose previous credits include IMMURAL TALES, THE BEAST and LULU) with a definite flair for eroticism, this is a very powerfully visualized story.

The film opens with the brutal attack on a young girl. She survives but news of this horrible event reaches

the home of Henry Jekyll where an engagement party is in progress. Along with Jekyll is his fiancée Frannie Osbourne, the General (portrayed by Patrick Magee), Frannie's mother, Dr. Lanyon (played by Jesus Franco stock actor Howard Vernon) who is very critical of Jekyll's ideas on transcendental medicine, and finally Father Feagen, a pottering old priest who mouths platitudes but says very little. In no time at all Edward Hyde shows up and literally rapes and kills all the guests. Before he departs he converts Frannie to his fold (she stabs her mother to death) and they ride off in a carriage licking the blood off each other.

Borowczyk injects a lot of black humor into the proceedings, usually centering around Magee's blowhard General. Magee wildly shoots at anything that moves in an attempt to kill Hyde. When he accidentally kills the coachman he mutters "I'm terribly, terribly sorry.", before he resumes shooting at anything that moves. The General's daughter is so liberated by the wickedness of Hyde, she strips in front of her father, fondles a sewing machine (an example of Polish eroticism I guess), and moans him! More than one character remarks "the sex of the criminal was extremely long and pointed.", meaning he was hung like a hairspray can. Udo Kier does not portray both roles (though the same voice was dubbed). The actor who depicts Hyde is extremely frightening with his shaved sideburns and sunken eyeballs. The cinematography by Noel Very is a masterful use of Fujicolor, with diffused lighting and subdued colors. I'll watch a film like this over American made junk anyday.

DOCTOR JEKYLL'S WOMEN
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